

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-37 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-37 have been rejected. By the above amendments, claims 1, 11, 20, 30, and 37 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-37 are currently pending.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Within the Office Action, claims 1-37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereafter "Witek"). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the following reasons.

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search (Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46). The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search.

Further, within the Office Action it is stated that Witek teaches a dichotomous key search. To support this assertion, Figure 3, element 70, and column 16, lines 27-50 are cited. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with this conclusion. Column 16, lines 27-50 of Witek refer to a mapped field 70 within the secondary selection parameters 62. Witek teaches that the mapped

fields 70 are “yes-no” secondary features that provide details concerning the ad record subject matter. In particular, Witek teaches that the yes-no fields 70 provide up to 32 features which the user can simply check off in a selection menu (such as element 146 in Figure 10) to further describe the ad to be viewed. However, this is no different than a parametric search in which the parameters are limited to yes or no. Within the Office Action, it is stated that the present specification defines a “dichotomous key search” as the ability to instruct users through an answer and question dialog, often yes or no answers, and that Witek also gives the user the option of answering questions by checking the boxes in the selection menu. It is therefore concluded within the Office Action that these two search options are the same. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the conclusion that the selection menu 146 including yes-no fields 70 of Witek is the same as a dichotomous key search as described in the present application.

It is well known in the art that a parametric search is a search performed that fits a number of simultaneous criteria, or parameters. Parametric searching allows people to find items of interest based on an individual item's parameters, or particular characteristics. Data is structured into categories and subcategories and associated with parameters that describe those categories. How do parametric search engines work? Typically, a knowledge base is developed with many searchable data types associated with an instance, or item of data. These data types likely include text, text arrays, numeric ranges, boolean values, and named lists for each unique data item. All of the above types are called “parameters” or attributes of the data item.

The definition of a parametric search, as defined within the present specification, is consistent with that which is well known in the art. Specifically, the present specification refers to customizable parametric search technology that allows users to precisely locate desired information by searching parametric data that is contained within each node of a directory tree structure (Specification, page 18, lines 1-3). Each node represents a category. The types of parameters include, but are not limited to, true-false, selected list, range of values, and alphabetic list (Specification, page 27, lines 1-2).

As the definition of a parametric search is well known in the art, it is not necessary to define “parametric search” within the present claims.

It is well known in the art that a dichotomous key is a two-branched key where choosing between two characteristics continues through the key until identification is complete. There are many examples on the internet to support the well known nature of “a dichotomous key”, following are just a few:

From Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, "Dichotomous key - a key for the identification of organisms based on a series of choices between alternative characters."

From www.mansfield.ohio-state.edu, "Questions are arranged hierarchically where more general questions are asked first, with questions becoming more specific asked subsequently. Questions are dichotomous meaning that each have two possible answers, with each answer distinguishing the path to the next question."

From www.lucidcentral.com, "Dichotomous - meaning of the word 'two-branching'. Structure of the key is that each question acts as a tree branch that has smaller branches proceeding it."

From www.bioedonline.org, "Dichotomous key - pairs of contrasting descriptions."

The definition of a dichotomous key search, as defined within the present specification, is consistent with that which is well known in the art. Specifically, as presented in the response to the previous Office Action, the present specification refers to a dichotomous key search as "a binary key structure or two-node tree. This structure is used as a decision tree mechanism to instruct users in deciphering information given in an answer or question dialog, often a yes or no answer. Examples of this include diagnosing a medical disease, diagnosing a mechanical problem, and working a system such as classifying a biological species by physical attributes" (Specification, page 18, lines 6-10).

As the definition of a dichotomous key search is well known in the art, it is not necessary to define "dichotomous key search" within the present claims.

Witek teaches a yes-no field 70 (Figure 3) which is one of a secondary selection parameters 62. By the definition within Witek, the yes-no field 70 is a parameter. Specifically, the "yes-no" field is a "true-false" field, which is defined above as one type of parameter used in a conventional parametric search. As such, the yes-no field 70 of Witek is used to perform a parametric search.

The yes-no field 70 is a part of a record selection table 44, which is manifested to a user for data input via a selection parameter menu 140. Within the selection parameter menu 140 are a set of yes-no parameters 146, which correspond to the yes-no fields 70. By their vary

definition, the yes-no parameters 146 are parameters, and as such, are used to perform a parametric search.

Within the Office Action, it is stated that the present specification discloses an example of a dichotomous key search being a yes no answer. However, as described above, this is only a partial definition of the dichotomous key search. A dichotomous key search, as part of the question answer format, can include a yes or no answer. However, the yes or no answer is in response to a single posed question, where the single question is the only question presented to the user. The answer to the single question leads to another, more specific, question related to the answer to the previous question. In contrast, the yes-no checkbox parameters 146 of Witek are a series of parameters which are all presented in parallel and are all answered in parallel. There is no subsequent question posed which is based on the previous yes or no selection of the checkbox 146. Witek teaches a simultaneous selection of multiple yes-no parameters, e.g. parallelism.

By definition, a dichotomous key search, at any decision step, provides a binary choice, thus the term di-chotomous. The check box form of Witek (parameters 146), are part of a larger record selection step, where a plurality of check boxes are presented to the user. In this manner, the user is not presented with two choices, the user is presented with a yes-no option for a multitude of check boxes. So although each check box is a yes or no, the entire record selection presentation (e.g. selection parameter menu 140) includes multiple, simultaneous yes-no decisions to be made. Multiple yes-no selections are a parametric search, not a single, binary choice.

Each of the independent claims specifies a search module including a dichotomous key search. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search.

The independent claim 1 is directed to a method of formatting information within a directory tree structure. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, selecting one of the matching items, formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the

selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 2-10 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 2-10 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 11 is directed to an organization system for formatting information within a directory tree structure. The organization system of claim 11 is configured to perform a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, to select one of the matching items, to format the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and to display the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 12-19 depend on the independent claim 11. As described above, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 12-19 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 20 is directed to an organization system for formatting information within a directory tree structure. The organization system of Claim 20 comprises means for performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the

directory tree structure, means for selecting one of the matching items, means for formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and means for displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 20 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 21-29 depend on the independent claim 20. As described above, the independent claim 20 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 21-29 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 30 is directed to an organization system for formatting information within a directory tree structure. The organization system of Claim 30 comprises one or more computer systems configured to communicate with other systems, and an organization server configured to couple to the one or more computer systems to perform a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, to select one of the matching items, to format the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, and to display the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 30 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 31-36 depend on the independent claim 30. As described above, the independent claim 30 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 31-36 are also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 37 is directed to a method of formatting information within a directory tree structure. The method of Claim 37 comprises the steps of performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search, to correlate a search criteria to a searchable database for

generating one or more matching items, wherein the searchable database is formatted in the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, and further wherein each matching item represents a node from within the directory tree structure, selecting one of the matching items, formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry, wherein the encyclopedia-like entry includes text, graphics, links to related topics within the directory tree structure, links to related web sites external to the directory tree structure, or any combination thereof, and displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a search module that includes a dichotomous key search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 37 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-37 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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